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ABSTRACT

In 1967 representatives from 3 colleges in South Alabama (Alabama State College, Montgomery; Livingston State College, Livingston; and Troy State College, Troy) met and organized a consortium to stimulate research on the campuses of the institutions. A grant was issued to the consortium to facilitate the goal of stimulating research. The consortium was organized with a consortium director at Troy State College who doubled as an institutional director at Troy State, and institutional directors at the other 2 colleges. Each college appointed a research committee to screen research proposals submitted by faculty members on their respective campuses. Since the outset of the consortium, each institution has established an office of institutional research, each has been designated a university, and each is continuing its program of educational research. (HS)

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Final Report

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SOUTH ALABAMA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

February, 1972

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SOUTH ALABAMA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Abstract:

In 1967 three colleges in South Alabama, Alabama State College, Montgomery, Livingston State College, Livingston, and Troy State College, Troy, met and organized a consortium to stimulate research on the campuses of these institutions. They applied for and received a Research and Development Grant from the U. S. Office of Education. This grant covered an initial three-year period from July 1, 1967 through June 30, 1970. The consortium requested, and was granted, an extension of this grant until February 16, 1972. The major purpose of the grant was to stimulate research in each of the three institutions.

The first year of the grant period was devoted to organization of the consortium for research, recognition of areas of needed research, initiation of institutional research on each of the campuses, and identification of common problems for inter-institutional research.

To facilitate achievement of consortium objectives the consortium was structured with a consortium director at Troy State College, who also served as institutional director at Troy State, and an institutional director at Alabama State College, and Livingston State College. Each college appointed a research committee to screen research proposals submitted by faculty members on their respective campuses.

The project director and institutional directors held monthly meetings to discuss progress and problems. Members of the research committees held annual meetings in the fall of each year to share ideas for research.

Since receiving the grant each insitution has established an office of institutional research. All three of the colleges have been designated universities and each is continuing its program of educational research.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

"The Cooperative Research Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-531) as amended by Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 (Public Law 89-10) authorized support for research, surveys, demonstrations and disseminations and for the development and strengthening of educational research capabilities. To extend opportunities for participation in educational research, the Bureau of Research of the Office of Education allocates a portion of its cooperative research funds for research devlopment grants to be used by colleges which have done little educational research in the past but now have definite plans to develop their research capacity and apply results to improving their on going program."

In 1966, acting under the above authorization, the U. S. Office of Education established a series of programs entitled Consortium on Research and Development (CORD). The purposes of these CORD grants were to enable relatively small institutions to develop programs in educational research.

The rationale for establishing these grants was that the "mini-grants" awarded faculty members would enable them to initiate their own research proposals and that these would be funded thereby producing an on-going research program after the termination of the CORD grant. Seven of the CORD grants were funded in 1966. Six of the seven involved groupings of three or more small institutions in a relatively close geographical area. Aware of this program and its patterns of funding, and desiring to create on-going research programs in their institutions, three relatively small colleges in South Alabama joined in the South Alabama Research Consortium and received a grant to begin July 1, 1967. It is the purpose of this final report to describe the four-year operation of this consortium grant and to make recommendations based on the experiences gained from these four years of operation.

The three colleges comprising the Consortium, Alabama State College in Montgomery, Livingston State College in Livingston, and Troy State College in Troy, had several characteristics or problems in common:

1. They were state institutions operating on a close budget.
2. There had been very little institutional research on which to base administrative decisions and none organized on a continuing basis.
3. Nearly all educational research undertaken was on an individual faculty or administrator basis.
4. Heavy teaching loads prevented teachers who desired to conduct research from doing so.

Other factors which tended to make these three colleges a "natural" for a consortium effort were:

1. They were the only state colleges in South Alabama.
2. The proximity of the institutions (Troy is 160 miles from Livingston and 50 miles from Alabama State which is 120 miles from Livingston).
3. Most of the students come from rural South Alabama.
4. All functioned under the same board of control, the State Board of Education.
5. Between 57 and 85 percent of the students in each college were teacher education majors.
6. Financial support came mainly from state and federal sources and student fees; endowments were non-existent.
7. Seven new junior colleges were opened for the first time in the area served by these colleges in the fall of 1965.

Recognizing the need for establishing an on-going program in institutional and educational research and being aware of the advantages of pooling ideas and expertise to arrive at solutions to common problems, the three colleges formed the South Alabama Research Consortium.

The objectives of the South Alabama Research Consortium as stated in the original proposal were: 1) to develop an office of institutional research in each college that would exist and function after outside financial aid is withdrawn; 2) to develop a program of institutional and educational research that will serve the needs of the faculty as well as the administration; 3) to develop the research potential of the teaching faculty; 4) to provide research experiences for undergraduate and graduate students and 5) to develop an inter-institutional research program that will help in the problems common to all members of the consortium.

Participants in the consortium recognized several factors which contributed to the research problems. These were: 1) faculty and administration need for advice and assistance with the planning of research projects and the securing of support for same, 2) lack of time to plan and conduct research, 3) absence of research assistance and clerical help for research related activities, 4) lack of a stimulating environment for research.

In order to help overcome some of these limitations, the original proposal requested funds from the U. S. Office of Education for support of the following activities: 1) release time for a faculty member to serve as project director 2) release time for a faculty member at each of the other two colleges to serve as institutional research director, 3) clerical assistance, 4) stipends or release time for faculty members to conduct research, 5) consultant funds, and 6) funds for inter-institutional workshops.

Procedures:

1. Organization and Administration

Since none of the three institutions had an individual who was responsible for research activities, the first year of the consortium was an "organizational year" in which the basic organization of the consortium was set up to: 1) develop the research abilities and stimulate research among faculty members, 2) identify problems and 3) assess and organize research potential. The second year was designated "implementation year" and the third year "education and consolidation year."

The organization for development of research potential was as follows: 1) Troy State University was the contracting agency and provided the director of inter-institutional research as Project Director. The duties of the Project Director were a) the development of interinstitutional research projects, b) the education of all faculties concerning the purposes, values and functions of institutional and educational research, c) the development of a program and office of institutional research for each institution, d) the development of the educational research potential of all faculties, e) the management of seminars, workshops, etc. to accomplish the above purposes. 2) Each institution in the consortium had a director of institutional research whose duties were: a) to develop an office of institutional research on the campus of his institution, b) to plan and carry out inter-institutional research with the Project Director, c) to assist the Project Director in the development of workshops, seminars, and other activities for improving research abilities and stimulating interest among faculty members, d) to stimulate and coordinate research activities on his campus. 3) Each college had a committee on institutional research. This committee consisted of one representative from each major academic and administrative division of the college. The purposes of these committees were to: a) assist in the organization of the college's program of institutional and educational research, b) advise in the selection and development of research projects, c) consider research projects submitted by faculty members and recommend reduced work loads and financial support for approved projects. 4) Each institutional member of the consortium had a representative on a three-man consortium Board of Directors. The consortium Board of Directors served as the policy-making body for the consortium.

During the grant period two different persons served as Project Director. Three different persons served as director of institutional research at Livingston and three different persons served as director of institutional research at Alabama State.

Consortium Activities

The initial activities of the consortium were designed to identify problems that merited research and to determine avenues by which these problems might be approached. Consultants were utilized by each of the institutions and the Directors of Institutional Research and some members of the Institutional Research Committees met with consultants to initiate studies. Initial research dealt with cost analysis, faculty workload survey, faculty-research potential, unit cost of instruction. Most research was of an "institutional" nature rather than an "educational" nature during the first year of the consortium. A conference on institutional research was held on the campus of Alabama State University. Dr. Galen Drewry of the University of Georgia conducted the conference.

During the second year of the grant more emphasis was placed on educational research. Grant money was used as "seed grants" to encourage faculty members to undertake individual research problems in their teaching areas. The Project Director and Institutional Directors continued to hold monthly meetings. The Project Director and one Institutional Director attended the H.E.W. sponsored "Research Institute" during August, 1968. The second annual consortium conference was held at Alabama State College, on October 11, 1968. Dr. Donald Cruickshank was consultant for the conference. All members of the Institutional Research Committees of the three colleges were present for the conference.

During the third year of the consortium Dr. Raymond Deming Project Director, resigned to become President of Chipola Junior College and Dr. Billy Norman became Project Director. Dr. Neptune, Institutional Director at Alabama State resigned and was replaced by Dr. Dev Bajaj, and Dr. Howard Fortney, Institutional Director at Livingston State resigned and was replaced by Dr. Donald W. Findlason. Projects on institutional research continued and additional "seed grants" were awarded. The Project Director attended a two-week research training institute in the summer of 1969 conducted at the Training Research Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education at Monmouth, Oregon. This institute was very valuable. An extensive set of self-instructional materials was presented.

Materials developed by the institute served as the basis of the third annual consortium conference held at Alabama State in the fall of 1969. Concurrent sessions on research design, proposal writing, evaluation, and PERT, and ERIC were conducted. These materials were made available to the Institutions for Faculty Training sessions.

Faculty members at each of the institutions were kept informed of the activities of the consortium through the school papers, local papers, and members of the Institutional Research Committees. Research proposals were solicited and screened by the research committees, guidelines for proposal writing were furnished faculty members as were sources of funds. Exchange of research reports, meetings of Institutional Directors, frequent correspondence and annual conferences provided exhange of ideas and findings between colleges of the consortium.

Results: Individual Faculty Research Activities

A major emphasis of the South Alabama Research Consortium was to recognize research potential in the faculties of the participating institutions and to stimulate and develop this potential. This was accomplished by helping faculty members locate regions of needed research and providing them with incentive to do the research. The hoped for end result was that small projects initiated would result in additional grants. All of the colleges have been successful in acquiring additional grants.

The program was very successful in getting the faculty involved in educational research as shown by the variety and number of "seed grant" projects.

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Earl F. Hilliard:	The Application of the Socratic and Case Methods to the Teaching of Business Law
Sinclair O. Lewis:	An Experimental Approach to the Teaching of General Psychology
Ann Scott:	Special Course Teaching for English 322
Sinclair O. Lewis:	Agreement of Perceived Value Components in College Teachers
Alma H. Cohill:	Two Approaches to Teaching the Research Paper in Freshman English
Charles Prott:	A Study of the Growth and Anti-Growth Chemicals Invclved in Wound Healing
Zelia S. Evans:	An Attempt to Increase Students' Mastery and Application of Seven Principles of Learning
Robert H. Sanders:	Psychometric Indices in Sociological Communication
Johnny Jackson:	Promotion of Abscission by the Iodide Ion
Dev Raj Bajaj:	The Comparative Effectiveness of Programmed Instruction in Teaching Statistics
Chester D. Mallory:	A Study of Alabama State University Seniors on the Four Subtests of the National Teacher Examinations

(Alabama State College cont'd.)

Rosa T. Storrs:	A Survey of Attitudes of Students Toward Utilization of the University Health Center
M. L. Morrison:	Identifying and Developing Institutional Support and Capability to Supplement Staff Development in Adult Basic Education
Alma Cohill and Beverly Shetfall:	Tutorial Program in Freshman English
Ralph J. Bryson:	The Use of Audio-Visual Materials in the Teaching of American Literature
Chester D. Mallory:	The Effect of a Programmed Course in English on Students Who Failed the English Proficiency Examination

LIVINGSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Margaret H. Murphy:	Identification of Dyslexiacs at Livingston University
Charles A. Robins:	Comparing Deficient Freshman English Students with Regular and Advanced Students
Nathaniel E. Reed:	Preparation and Use of Transparencies in an Introductory Linguistics Course
Robert M. Lyon:	Evaluation of a Course in Critical Thinking
W. L. Chatham:	Evaluation of Leavell and Delacato Service in Difficulty of Crossed Eye-Hand Dominance
Shirley A. Lamb:	Improving Instruction in Methods Courses in Elementary Education
Katherine Johnston:	Improving Instruction in Teacher Education Methods Courses by Use of Video Taping to Enhance Micro-Teaching Techniques Prior to Student Teaching
Lloyd E. Parnell:	School Administration and Supervision
Linda Alexander:	The Effectiveness of Large Group Instruction

(Livingston State University cont'd.)

Glen Bridges:	The Effectiveness of Using the Overhead Projector in Instruction in Business, Shorthand and Economics
Bob Riesener:	The Problem of the Proper Method of Sacrifice Bunting in Baseball
Aileen Nixon:	A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of Using Transparencies in General Biology 132
Ralph M. Lyon:	A Search for Methods, Devices, and Techniques that Give the Greatest Promise of Teaching Students How to do Critical Thinking
Jerry L. McGriff:	A Study to Determine if Periodic Grading of Laboratory Manuals Will Enchance the Student's Learning Situation in the Laboratory
A. J. Killebrew:	A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of Using a Pre-Calculus Course to Replace the Present Course in College Algebra and Trigonometry
Charles Tucker:	Kodachrome Slides as a Teaching Aid in Field Biology
	A Study of the Possible Advantage of Using a Programmed Algebra Text for Mathematics

TROY STATE UNIVERSITY

R. C. Paxson:	A Pilot Study to Determine the Effect of Interfacial, Adjunct Learning Programs on Students Engaged in Regular Studies
Donald Dodd:	An Analysis of the Effect of a Syllabus on the Performance of Alabama History Classes
Billy R. Norman:	A Comparison of Achievement of Chemistry Students as a Function of Class Size
Theo Dalton:	Student Participation in Teaching Literature

(Troy State University cont'd.)

Rudy Argenti:	Item Analysis of a Physical Education Knowledge
M. Study Slater:	Pre-and Post Testing for Freshman Composition
Eugene O'Masta:	Measurement of Physics Comprehension in a Small Class Vs. a Larger Class
Josephine Warner:	An Experiment in Large Unit Teaching and Other Innovations in an Undergraduate Course
Milton McPherson:	Significant Variations in the Learning-Retention Rate in Visually Augmented American History Lecture Classes
Sonya T. Womach:	Effect of Discussion of Freshman Composition Papers with the Aid of an Opaque Projector on Student Performance
Rudi Argenti:	Estimating Rater Reliability
Adan F. Gara:	Research in Teaching Elementary German
Tex Whaley:	A Study of the Use of Simulated Teaching Materials in the Teacher Education Program, Troy State University
Alice Thornton:	Art of Sierra Leone and West Coast Africa
Paul Reyes:	Effectiveness of ACT test scores as Criterion for Placing a Student in an Advanced Composition Course

Institutional Research

An office of Institutional Research was established at each of the institutions. Each of the institutions conducted studies related to cost analysis, space utilization, etc. Detailed "Fact Books" containing statistics related to enrollment, student characteristics, finance, etc., were developed and are being maintained on a continuing basis.

Note: Copies of these reports are available at the Troy State University Library

Conclusion:

The principle objectives of this grant were to get the member colleges which participated involved in organized programs of institutional research on their respective campuses and to identify faculty members with research potential to develop this potential, and help them get grant funds from other sources to continue their research projects after the termination of the CORD grant. The Consortium was successful in the first of these objectives in that each of the institutions now has an on-going program of institutional research.

The Consortium has not met with quite as much success in achieving the second objective. Faculty potential for research was determined and cultivated; however, the funds for continued research have not been forthcoming. There might be several reasons for this: (1) faculty members who engaged in the "mini grant" research projects were given stipends rather than release time. In a college where the normal teaching load is 15 hours, a faculty does not have time to do research of a magnitude to receive grant assistance. (2) Most of the faculty members at these colleges are more interested in teaching than research because the universities involved do not reward faculty members for research.

The total impact of this grant cannot be evaluated at this time. It did much to make the faculty members and the administration more research conscious. Through the Consortium, faculty members became aware of sources of funds for projects they had not know of before. The research skills of faculty members were enhanced through seminars and discussion. The three colleges, now universities, involved developed a much closer working relationship and understanding and have a good basis for further Consortium efforts. There was a good amount of spin-off from the project which benefited the respective universities. Troy State University wrote a proposal and was funded for two summer institutes for high school biology teachers under the National Science Foundation CCSS Program. Alabama State University received a grant from the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Research. This project utilized some of the expertise developed through the Consortium.

In summary, the project accomplished the purpose for which it was intended. Institutional and educational research are now being actively pursued at each of the member institutions of the Consortium. At present, we still exchange ideas and information. The degree to which the research projects will be funded is doubtful. Teaching and not research is the primary thrust of each of the institutions. Faculty members have increased their skill as researchers and some of them are more interested in research.